

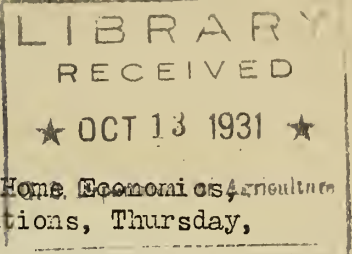
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THE HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

*Thermometer, a good gauge for heat*



A radio talk by Rowena Schmidt Carpenter, Bureau of Home Economics, Agriculture, delivered through station WRC and 43 other associate NBC stations, Thursday, October 1, 1931.

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How do you do, Homemakers!

We live in an age, you and I, of scientific housekeeping. We are (or at least we are supposed to be) running our households on a carefully worked out schedule, feeding our families in line with a good nutrition program, spending our incomes on a budget plan, and buying household and personal things only after we have read and digested what is called "consumer's information." Our job has been analyzed and systematized. It's all right these days to have hit or miss patterns in hooked rugs. That is an old fashion revived. But hit or miss patterns in homemakers are taboo, replaced by a standardized pattern planned for efficiency's sake. We are, you and I, "the modern homemaker" that manufacturers appeal to in their advertising and that a great many people address in their writing and their broadcasting. They may call us what they will, - I like us as we are. We're really a fortunate group of individuals, with all sorts of advantages and opportunities that no other generation of women enjoyed. We're fortunate because we know (or have plenty of places to learn) the reasons for everything we do. Science has explained the former mysteries of one household problem after another, and, keeping pace with the times, the manufacturer has provided us with suitable equipment so our housework has become easier and more interesting, and our results more sanitary and ever so much more accurate.

Perhaps you are wondering what has struck me today, what set me off along this line of talk. Well, it was just this: I went into Miss Alexander's laboratory, her experimental kitchen we usually call it, where she and one of her assistants are roasting eight standing rib cuts of beef. Each roast has a thermometer in it, each of the eight ovens is equipped with a heat control, and besides, Miss Alexander has placed a portable thermometer in each oven, as a further check on the cooking temperature she is using. The thermometer thrust into the centermost part of the lean of the meat takes the temperature of roast as it cooks. Miss Alexander records the meat temperature and the oven temperature at frequent intervals during the roasting. If the oven temperature gets a little too high or too low, she decreases or increases the heat. When the thermometer in the meat registers the desired degree, Miss Alexander takes the roast from the oven. By this method she can know exactly when the inside of a piece of meat is rare, medium, or well done. She often says: "A roast meat thermometer removes the guesswork". And if you could sample these experimental roasts, and judge for yourself how "cooked to a turn" they are, you'd agree with her.

But not just roast meat thermometers, --all sorts of thermometers remove the guesswork from the jobs they measure. In fact, thermometers are one of the advantages that we modern homemakers have over our grandmothers. And think of what use we make of them. I was surprised to find on counting them up that I use five different kinds of thermometers in my homemaking: one to record room temperature in the living portion of the house; one to take body temperature in case of illness (and of them all none is so important to own  
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as this one which druggists often call a "fever" thermometer); one for telling me for sure how hot my oven is; a roast meat thermometer to make our roasts turn out as well as Miss Alexander's; and a general cooking thermometer to use in deep fat frying and making cake icings. If you have never used a thermometer to tell you that the fat is hot enough for the doughnuts or the French fried potatoes, you can't know what a comfort it is to be sure BEFORE the fat smokes. Because you know when the fat is smoking you're just a bit too late; it is TOO hot, and it has begun to change chemically and to form substances that are irritating to our digestive systems. Properly fried things, done in fat just hot enough to sear a crust to prevent fat-soaking, and not so hot that the heat is decomposing the fat --foods fried under these circumstances are more digestible than fried foods we often eat.

I purposely haven't given you a single temperature today. If you wish I had, let us send you some of the Bureau of Home Economics publications where you will find temperatures in print, right along with the recipes where they are useful. All six of our meat leaflets: Cooking beef, lamb, pork, cured pork, reindeer, and rabbit, our leaflets on egg cookery and on ice cream, the home baking bulletin and most popular of them all - Aunt Sammy's Radio Recipes Book Revised, every one of these ten bulletins have recipes that recommend temperatures to take the guesswork out of cooking, and incidentally to help us live up to our reputation as scientific homemakers! Goodbye, until next Thursday.